

Conrad's "The Secret Sharer" : The Art of Narrative

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Summary : This study is to elucidate how CONRAD presents the narrative in "The Secret Sharer" and what makes a perspective of the narrative by looking at the distinctive features of this short story in relation to Conrad's other novels.

Key words : Conrad, short fiction, the first-person narrative, double, "The Secret Sharer", "Heart of Darkness", *Under Western Eyes*

Introduction

The first person narrator came into being 'to make you see' to satisfy the credo of the impressionism manifested in the 1896 Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* ; 'My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you see'. Conrad's impressionism focuses more on the visual sense than the auditory and sensory ones. Ian WATT points out that the most distinctive quality of Conrad's own writing, unlike Ford Madox FORD, is 'its strong visual sense' and that Conrad's narrative technique constitutes 'an original kind of multiple visual impressionism'ⁱ, especially when WATT discusses "Heart of Darkness", which has the narrator-behind-narrator style of narrative. Edward W. SAID, in his analysis of Conrad's narrative, refers to the impressionist's credo in the Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* as the formulation of his primary ambition to 'make his readers experience the vitality and the dynamism of *seen things*'ⁱⁱ.

CONRAD the visually-oriented impressionist tries to seek justification in telling the stories. SAID analyzes where this self-consciousness comes from : 'Conrad's narratives pay unusual attention to the *motivation* of the stories being told ; this is evidence of a self-consciousness that felt it necessary to justify in some way the telling of a story'ⁱⁱⁱ. Therefore, in Conrad's narrative, the main narrator needs another narrator or

other narrators to listen and testify to the motivation of the narrative, so that the dramatization of the narrative, i.e., how, when, where the story is told becomes more important than what is told. The self-consciousness caused the narrative to be transmitted orally through layers of points of view, such as the multiple reported speeches in *Chance*, the swapped yarn based on hearsay and interviews in *Lord Jim*, and the translation of one's personal experience through the narrator-behind-narrator style in "Heart of Darkness", which was once referred to by an African critic as a cordon sanitaire against the racial preoccupation^{iv}.

The narrator-captain in "The Secret Sharer", like Marlow, is the product of Conrad's impressionism, and he tells what he sees. Unlike Marlow, however, he tells what the others on board cannot see and does not have his audience. In translation of his experience, the narrator-captain does not have a witness, a watching hearer, unlike Marlow in "Heart of Darkness". The narrator in "The Secret Sharer" is an arbitrary narrator, who confines himself in his consciousness and creates a witnesser to make himself a witnesser for the success of his profession. He narrates the things not seen by the other crew, such as Leggatt and his hat, and does not narrate the definitely seen things, such as the ship and himself, the concrete from which language can arbitrarily jump.

Lawrence GRAVER in his intensive study on Conrad's short fiction summarizes the direction of streams in the

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criticism on “The Secret Sharer” to call attention to what has been left out: ‘The supreme case in point is “The Secret Sharer,” widely acclaimed as a psychological masterpiece, and the subject of more fanciful interpretations than any of Conrad’s other stories. Yet no one who has written on this problematical tale has given a wholly reliable sense of its peculiar distinction’.^v The peculiar distinction is a series of uncanny aspects, such as recurring images of the captain’s resemblance to Leggatt despite his statement ‘He was not a bit like me, really’^{vi}, which emphasize all the more symbolic and metaphorical aspects of the story; Leggatt’s precarious physical existence and the floppy hat. Leggatt and the floppy hat he left behind are unseen things to the other crewmen on board but are visually narrated by the captain ‘I’.

The Double-self and its Reality

The imagery of ‘double’ in “The Secret Sharer” (completed in December 1909, serialized in *Harper’s Magazine* August to September, 1910, and published as one of the three short stories in *Twixt Land and Sea*, 1912) and in *Under Western Eyes* (completed in January 1910 and published in 1911) forms one stream in Conrad’s fiction: The anti-social other self. The images and ideas that come up in short stories appear later in novels to be developed into more complicated forms in his writing career. “The Lagoon” (completed in August 1896)^{vii} and “Karain: A Memory” (in April 1897)^{viii} are harbingers of the story of compunction and remorse confessed by Jim in *Lord Jim — A Tale* (in 1900) and by Razumov in *Under Western Eyes*. “Karain” has the germ of ‘double’ in *Under Western Eyes* when the betrayed one is haunting the protagonist; i.e. the ghost of Matara is haunting Karain like that of Haldin haunting Razumov, and the ghost is the direct motive to drive them to tell tales. The disillusionment of the civilization in “An Outpost of Progress” (completed in July 1896)^{ix} recurs in the complex, more refined ways in the novella “Heart of Darkness” (in February 1899)^x. The narrative technique in “The Lagoon”, which introduces three points of view, Arsat as the first-hand narrator, a white man listening to him, and the anonymous on-looker narrator, is a precursor of manifold points of view in “Youth” (completed in June 1898)^{xi}, “Heart of Darkness” and the last Marlow story *Chance* (completed in March 1912, published in 1913).

Recurrence of the images and ideas appears to be directed from short fiction to novels in Conrad’s writing career. “The Secret Sharer” has the same main idea as that of *Under Western Eyes*, and its anonymous

narrator seems to be similar to the other first-person narrators, e.g. his later version ‘I’ in *The Shadow Line* (completed in 1915, published in 1917), the language teacher in *Under Western Eyes* and Marlow all through his stories. The narrator-captain ‘I’ in “The Secret Sharer”, however, stands out in relief from his ilk and the treatment of the double self theme is distinctive among Conrad’s works for the unique ways CONRAD embroidered it in the text.

The double-self situation, in which the protagonist encounters with his counterpart invading his life, invites a variety of discussion and inevitable questions: Is it an evil that should be exorcised as a solution, or is it the other truthful self that the captain should follow as a model in life? HEWITT regards Leggatt as an evil coming from outside, not from within man’s mind, and says that this failure marks an end of Conrad’s early phase because Leggatt appears as something wicked that should be got rid of from the beginning^{xii}, whereas R.W. STALLMAN treats Leggatt as an ideal counterpart that the captain has to learn from. Basically, STALLMAN interprets the meanings of symbols in the allegorical way, and relates them to the ethical approach to “The Secret Sharer” to conclude that ‘Leggatt has the cool-headed capacity for analyzing his past experience, the situation from which he has successfully escaped’ and ‘his moral courage’ to ‘consider himself subject only to the laws of conscience’. STALLMAN is definitely credible in referring to Leggatt as subject to ‘the laws of conscience’ in the sense that it is the internal law, the personal code of conduct. It is doubtful, however, if there are such opposing moral forces as “the opposition or conflict between the inner and outer standards, between the standards of conscience and those of external codes, conventions and laws”^{xiii}. The captain in “The Secret Sharer” is not afflicted by the dilemma between the personal feelings and the social codes of conduct while Razumov is in *Under Western Eyes*.

There is no opposing ethical conflict between the inner and outer codes that afflicts the protagonist in “The Secret Sharer”, only the internal, personal code of conduct matters in the relationship between the captain and Leggatt. When he regards “The Secret Sharer” as an allegorical moral anecdote based on the clear distinction of good and evil, HEWITT seems to ignore the arbitrary epistemology in this short fiction that everything being told is from within man’s mind and that nothing is narrated unless it is filtered through the narrator’s consciousness.

In addition to the question of how to understand Leggatt, another question that comes up is "Does Leggatt physically exist?", which seems to have been underestimated in criticism on "The Secret Sharer". Although Albert J. GUERARD warns that "It would be improper to forget, while preoccupied with psychological symbolism, that Leggatt is substantial flesh and blood"^{xiv}, "The Secret Sharer" is so rich in symbolic images and so large in metaphorical implications that it defies an imagery that Leggatt is substantial flesh and blood.

The chiaroscuro in the impressionist's tableau introduces Leggatt as a mysterious figure rising from the bottom of the sea. At a eureka moment, the narrator-captain encounters with Leggatt, who mysteriously appeared "as if he had risen from the bottom of the sea"^{xv}. The way he appears is not only dramatic but metaphorical, so that he seems unreal. Spontaneously, the narrator has accepted his double, and his willingness to accept the invader is reflected in his spontaneity to call Leggatt his double and repetition of the words 'my double' and 'my other self'. A.J. GUERARD evaluated the captain's instant response as 'the act of sympathetic identification with a suspect or outlaw figure'^{xvi} and summarized the double self theme by relating it to Conrad's professional background, 'CONRAD apparently detected in himself a division into a seaman-self (possibly damaging, possibly saving) into a respectable traditional rational seaman-self and a more interior outlaw-self that repudiated law and tradition'^{xvii}.

Presumption that the whole reality lies in the narrator's mind can be one of the answers to the straight question whether Leggatt actually exists. Casting doubt on his existence in "The Secret Sharer" should provide one step toward a better understanding of Conrad's art of narratives which has the undertones of autism and pessimism that reality lies in the narrator's consciousness and that nobody else can understand it at the end of the day.

Presupposition that Leggatt does not actually exist but a mere projection of the narrator's mind is not so far-fetched as the supposition that Haldin might not exist in *Under Western Eyes*. One remarkable difference between the two narratives is that the narrator is telling what he witnessed in "The Secret Sharer" while the narrator in *Under Western Eyes* is not the character who has experienced the events but is telling second-handedly. "The Secret Sharer" is the first-hand narrative by the first-person anonymous narrator without a

watching hearer, and *Under Western Eyes* is the second-hand narrative by the first-person anonymous narrator, who has the interviews with people involved and information based on the documents.

Another difference is the detachment from the actual events. In "The Secret Sharer" no one else shares reality with the narrator except for his secret sharer Leggatt, whereas in *Under Western Eyes* Haldin's sister Natalie and his mother Mrs. Haldin underwrite the flesh and blood of Victor Haldin, and they reinforce the secular reality of Razumov's tragedy. Razumov's counterpart is a pivot in the ideological conflicts in an international political situation, so Haldin has to exist in the real world. Leggatt as a double-self is presented through the narrator's personal vision in a symbolic, metaphorical context that blurs the dividing line between an individual and the community. Cedric WATTS summarizes the double-self theme in "The Secret Sharer" as follows: 'Against the secular plot of this tale plays a supernatural plot, and at the intermediate level where the two blend lies the motif of the uncanny Double'^{xviii}. The distinction of the secular and the supernatural becomes opaque as the narrator-captain tells the story.

In *Under Western Eyes* and "The Secret Sharer", Conrad's treatment of the double-self theme is also remarkably different, or rather opposite. The way in which the double appears takes a form of an invasion in both stories, but how the protagonists respond is opposite; Razumov tries to expel Haldin and his ghost from the very first moment to the last because Haldin is the anti-social force that would otherwise hinder Razumov's aspiration for climbing up the higher social scales. Razumov brings the terrorist to justice by tipping off, but Mikulin the representative of the social system imposes banishment on Razumov. Isolation from his country is imposed on Razumov in exchange for exorcism of Haldin the anti-social force. In contrast to this, the captain in "The Secret Sharer" voluntarily chooses isolation from the community, and he harbors the criminal as his anti-social counterpart to share his solitude. The double in "The Secret Sharer" provokes no conflicts; the narrator-captain does not have dichotomy between himself and the community he is to serve, unlike Jim and Razumov. He has such an arbitrary identification with Leggatt that it makes his double's existence unreal.

Gail FRASER compares the two works, based on the fact that 'CONRAD wrote "The Secret Sharer" when he was in the midst of the final section of the novel, in

which Razumov must resolve the conflict between his public and private selves^{xxix}, and the comparison is quite convincing when relating Haldin and Leggatt to the double-selves, Mikulin and Archbolt to representatives of the social system. FRASER seems to treat “The Secret Sharer” as the concise guidebook to *Under Western Eyes* when referring to “The Secret Sharer” as ‘a critique of the moral and political conditions that affect Razumov’s conduct at the beginning of *Under Western Eyes*’^{xx}. Fraser’s supposition is that Haldin and Leggatt are the moral conscience. This view is the general, major stream in Conrad’s criticism, with which I disagree. *Under Western Eyes* and “The Secret Sharer” respectively cast light on either side of the spectrum of one idea ; the moral conflicts in the secular world and amoral vacuum of the universe.

Six years later in Conrad’s fiction, the double self became more non-existent when it was reintroduced as the phantom of the predecessor captain in *The Shadow Line* (completed in 1915, published in 1917) , in which CONRAD retells the same material, that is, the story about a captain at his first command, again in the anonymous first-person point of view, which, however, is closer to that of autobiography.

The Double-self ; anti-social self

The undercurrent of autism is going on in “The Secret Sharer”. At the beginning of the narrative, before the encounter with his double, the narrator declares that he is ‘the only stranger on board’, ‘a stranger to the ship’, to the crew, and even to himself^{xxi}. Repetition of the word ‘stranger’ in his narrative reflects his disposition to isolation. The stand-offish captain finds the peace of mind in solitude and ‘rejoiced in the great security’^{xxii} when not disturbed by the crew.

Love of solitude and the standoffish attitude in life remind Conradian readers of Axel Heyst in *Victory*, but the reasons for Heyst’s isolationism are provided ; Heyst inherited misanthropy from his father, and has been stigmatized through bankruptcy and once evaporated. Apart from the discussion of whether the explanation is convincing enough, or whether his background has inevitability, still his background is provided to explain Heyst’s present isolationism. Nothing is given to explain the strange, awkward situation where the captain of “The Secret Sharer” is put, except for his own comment on the course ; ‘In consequence of certain events of no particular significance, except to myself, I had been appointed to the command only a fortnight before’^{xxiii}, which significantly parallels Archbolt’s com-

ment about how Leggatt got on board the *Sephora* ; ‘His people had some interest with my owners. I was forced to take him on’^{xxiv}. Archbolt’s further comment that Leggatt ‘wasn’t exactly the sort for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*’^{xxv} can be read as the textural implication not only of Leggatt’s awkward situation on the *Sephora* but also of the narrator-captain’s “strange” situation in the community on the nameless ship. The narrator-captain feels that ‘I’, too, was not the sort that would have done for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*^{xxvi}.

After the encounter with the outlaw double, he shares his isolation with him because the nature of his isolation is anti-social, which is implied by the captain’s defiance of the routines, the habitual rationalization of the chief mate, and such an embodiment of the law-abiding society as Archbolt.

The captain is ready to welcome Leggatt, who is a murderer and an outcast, and immediately starts to call him ‘my double’, ‘my other self’, ‘my secret stranger’, and is trying to hide him beyond the jurisdiction. On the other hand, Haldin, who is also a criminal outcast, is brought to justice by Razumov. He tries to expel Haldin and his ghost because Haldin is not only the anti-social force but the jarring voice that coerces him in his solitude. In contrast to this, the captain harbors his anti-social counterpart to share his isolation from the community, just for his peace of mind.

The crux of “The Secret Sharer” is that the captain of the ship, i.e. the centre of authority, accepts a criminal outlaw figure as his double and continues to hide him from everyone else’s eyes. His schizophrenic repetition of the words such as ‘a stranger to the ship’, ‘the only stranger on board’ and ‘a stranger to himself’ is an innuendo of his anxiety that he might not be accepted by the community and its members because of the outlaw impulses he vaguely detects in himself. His outlaw impulses rebellious to the established system are shown by his deviation from the routines ; the captain himself volunteered an exceptional five hours’ anchor-watch, and walked in his sleeping-suit on deck during the watch.

The captain just relieved the crew from the duty because ‘for the last two days the crew had had plenty of hard work, and the night before they had very little sleep’. His intention to make up for being a stranger to all the crew turns out to exacerbate his eccentricity. In response to his benevolent suggestion, the chief mate

'concealed his astonishment' and informed the second mate of 'my unheard-of caprice to take a five hours' anchor watch on myself'. The captain heard 'the other raise his voice incredulously—"What? The captain himself?"'^{xxvii}. The informality of their new captain wouldn't be accounted for from the view point of the mates as the captain reflects 'My action might have made me appear eccentric'^{xxviii}. His benevolent motive and generous decision end up being self-complacent and arbitrary in the eyes of the crew.

A sign of the captain's reluctance to commit himself in the society he belongs to is illuminated when he feels disturbed at the hints of human community :

the comfort of quiet communion with her was gone for good. And there were also disturbing sounds by this time — voices, footsteps forward ; the steward flitted along the main-deck, a busily ministering spirit ; a hand bell tinkled urgently under the poop-deck....^{xxix}

His solitude is not an imposed plight, but a voluntarily chosen ecstatic state of mind, a buffer against the encroachment of human interaction.

The captain often jeers the chief-mate, who is the quibble-monger. He abhors the habitual rationalization personified as the chief mate, who 'was of a pains-taking turn of mind' and 'liked to account to himself for practically everything that came in his way, down to a miserable scorpion he had found in his cabin a week before'^{xxx}. The rationalization is irreconcilable with his acceptance of the irrational other self, his inclination for solitude and his negligence of the duty as the captain. All of these are not accounted for in the eyes of his absurd mate, "Bless my soul—you don't say so" type of intellect.

In addition to his mockery of the chief mate's rationalization, the captain's contempt for Archbolt as a representative of the law-abiding society is another sign of anti-social impulses. When he first met Archbolt, the narrator judged that 'a spiritless tenacity is his main characteristic'. And at the end of the interview, his impression about Archbolt is 'a tenacious beast'^{xxxi}, who lingers shrewdly checking the cabin and elsewhere. Archbolt, who seems to belong to the shore rather than to the sea, appears more like an incompetent bureaucrat tenaciously clinging to the domesticity. With his wife on board the ship, Archbolt fosters the value of maintaining status in quo in the English

ship when he states, 'I've never heard of such a thing happening in an English ship. And that it should be my ship. Wife on board, too'^{xxxii}. Archbolt is 'a cowering functionary of a lackluster, antiheroic society'^{xxxiii} because he was doing nothing when the ship was in danger. He is searching for Leggatt, because he thinks it is 'painful duty'^{xxxiv} he has to complete, with 'his obscure tenacity'^{xxxv} to bring Leggatt to the law. The narrator detects 'something incomprehensible and a little awful'^{xxxvi} in that tenacity, with which Archbolt intends to bring Leggatt to the shore.

When Archbolt tries to coerce the captain by oblique steps, the captain takes the defensive attitude, which is explicit in his superfluously polite attitude and the tricks ; the captain 'behaved with a politeness which seemed to disconcert him'^{xxxvii} and pretends to be 'hard of hearing' so that every word should be audible to Leggatt, who is hiding in the recess. After receiving the words 'without the least sympathy', the narrator-captain answers 'Yes ; disease' as to the pretence of deafness 'in a cheerful tone which seemed to shock him [Archbolt]'^{xxxviii}. The intention is not only to evade suspicion but to keep Archbolt off simply because of his latent antagonistic feelings toward the law-abiding society personified. Knowing the captain's inability to hear, which is the captain's defensive measure to keep him away, Archbolt makes visually coercing gesture when he sticks out his tongue right before his face^{xxxix} 'to imitate the death mask of Leggatt's victim', pointed out by GRAVER as 'his most authoritative act'^{xl}. The narrator exclaimed in his monologue when his attitude finally aroused Archbolt's distrust, 'how else could I have received him? Not heartily! That was impossible for psychological reasons, which I need not state here'^{xli}.

Furthermore, the narrator senses he aroused enmity when he reflects that Archbolt must be 'disconcerted by the reverse side of that weird situation, by something in me that reminded him of the man he was seeking', which suggests 'a mysterious similitude to the young fellow he had distrusted and disliked from the first'^{xlii}. The narrator-captain and Leggatt are the believers of the personal code of conduct, so it is plausible that Archbolt, who is the incapable law-enforcer, hates them. Archbolt's impassive appearance, which is 'not exactly a showy figure' in 'his stature but middling' with 'rather smeary shade of blue in the eyes'^{xliii}, in addition to his 'mumbling'^{xliiv}, gives the impression that he should be a tenacious bureaucrat who thinks bringing Leggatt to court is the duty he has to complete. And the solution he says he is going to have to give is

more bureaucratic ; 'I suppose I must report a suicide'^{xlv}. He keeps to schedules.

Archbolt is one of the two figures who have names, but is the only figure that substantiates the bodily existence regardless of the narrator's insistence on his poor memory. The story is being told more like an introspective monologue through the narrator's consciousness than in reminiscence, because it doesn't reflect the passing of time between the present and past. The clichés about ambiguity of the name seem to be intended to suggest the detachment from the past. Still, the narrative gives the impression that time is conveniently, arbitrarily used here when the narrator-captain repeats such clichés as 'it was something like Archbolt — but at this distance of years I hardly am sure'^{xlvi} and 'Captain Archbolt (if that was his name)'^{xlvii}. His insistence on weak memory, however, implies his reluctance to empathize with the captain of the *Sephora* despite having the same profession. As he admits that Archbolt's version of the tale is 'not worth while to record'^{xlviii}, so is his name.

Through the interview, it should be noteworthy that the narrator's irreconcilability with the bureaucracy and domesticity which Archbolt represents stems from his reluctance to commit in the real world. The captain's spontaneous identification with the anti-social double is well accounted for in relation to his defiant nature against the deputies of the rational world, such as the chief mate and Archbolt. Leggatt is invisible to those who represent rationality and the law abiding society, and is conveyed through the narrator-captain's consciousness as imagery of his anti-social double, a projection of his mind rather than a substantial fictional character.

The last lines in the ending epitomize his anti-social attitude when he sends off Leggatt : 'the secret sharer of my cabin and of my thoughts, as though he were my second self, had lowered himself into the water to take his punishment : my second self, a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny'. The captain calls the outlaw the secret sharer of his thought, and celebrates him, now untouched by the law-abiding society that Archbolt represents, leaving him to 'sky and sea for spectators and for judges'^{xlix}.

The hat at the denouement

The hat appears to be the definite proof of Leggatt's flesh and blood, and seems to suggest that he may exist in the story. It is the hat that the captain says he gave

him and the one he says must have fallen off Leggatt's head. The hat seems to be the only thing to make his story real because he says the hat saved the ship by serving for a mark in "glassy smoothness of the sleeping surface"^l of the sea in the darkness.

And I watched the hat—the expression of my sudden pity for his mere flesh. It had been meant to save his homeless head from the dangers of the sun. And now—behold—it was saving the ship"^{li}

The floppy hat, the material existence, the proof of its owner's existence, or the trace of it, is the narrator's iconic memory of Leggatt. No one else witnessed the hat. Like Leggatt, the hat is another unseen thing, but visually narrated. The reality lies in the narrator-captain's consciousness. Conrad's impressionism gives the arbitrary vision of the unseen but spoken of, just like the gold mine in *Almayer's Folly*, in which everyone goes for the gold but no one sees it, and like Almayer's mansion already vanished well before the story begins but is ever talked about, for which Almayer is stigmatized all his life.

The white hat in darkness could be read as the victorious image of the personal code of conduct being superior to the social ones, such as the law, morality and the seaman's code. The hat is the metaphor of the bond that he thinks only he and Leggatt can understand, and it is also the proof of the narrator's delusions of grandeur of his profession, that is, his delusive aspiration for some remarkable achievement in his profession in spite of his negligence of the daily routines.

The hat is often discussed in relation to the captain's daring stunt which brings the ship to the reefy shore of Koh-ring. GUERARD introduces a Jungian compromise that a hat is the personality and suggests the transference of personality, concluding that the story ends with 'a desperate hope that both sides of the self might live on and go free, neither one destroyed'^{lii}. The floppy hat is not an illusion of the split personality or a symbol of the incomplete transference of personalities, but it is one of the unseen things, to which imagery Conrad's narrative brings readers again and again for its structural significance. The hat is another projection of the narrator's mind to give an integrity to the delusion of self-realization in his profession.

The captain gives the hat to Leggatt, who is going to be a fugitive and vagabond, just for the purpose of protecting his head from dangers of the scorching trop-

ical sun. At the denouement, the hat saves the ship out of the deadlock, functioning as a mark in the dark sea. The meaning of the story appears quid pro quo in personal relationship ; gaining rewards for life sacrifices. The captain provides Leggatt with the safest way out possible by risking the crew's lives. The captain brings the ship as close as possible to the reefed shore of the island of Koh-ring. The captain narrates, "It was now a matter of conscience to shave the land as close as possible"^{liii} because he gave priority to the personal relationship to Leggatt ; he had to risk the crew's lives in an attempt to make Leggatt's escape intact. Here comes up an argument as to why the captain risks all the crew's lives through the stunt in Koh-ring just to ensure a criminal's safety. It is because Leggatt is the dark accomplice, sharing the outlaw impulses and disbelief in the law-abiding society. Accordingly, the awareness of his identification with the other dark self elucidates the meaning of the often-quoted statement, "It was now a matter of conscience". It is not the matter of the social conscience, but of the personal one. Conscience is directed toward the personal relationship, not toward the community he is responsible for. The captain would have felt guilty toward Leggatt if he hadn't tried his best to provide him with the safest way out.

In return for this daring stunt, Leggatt offered the hat, which would otherwise protect him from the lethal heat of the sun, to put a mark to save the ship out of the deadlock in the darkness. As a result, Leggatt saved the ship and the crew's lives by sacrificing the protection of his life. Giving away the hat is another stunt in the narrative because it might risk his life in the endless flight under the scorching tropical sun. Leggatt's reward is the safe way out of human society. The captain's reward is the same as Leggatt's. The captain retains peace of mind by sending off his other self into the bottom of the sea where it came from, which parallels his temporary concealment of anti-social impulses, far from all human eyes.

Time and Consciousness

The episode in "The Secret Sharer" is based on a murder case that happened on board the *Cutty Sark* in 1880^{liv}. The chief mate, named Sydney Smith, abused a disobedient Negro mate, John Francis, and killed him with a bar after a quarrel. Smith persuaded the captain of the ship, Wallace, to let him escape and was released from his duty off the ship by the captain's order. Later, he was arrested, accused of manslaughter, and sentenced to seven months' imprisonment. As additional infor-

mation of this case, the captain Wallace committed suicide^{lv}.

"The Secret Sharer" does not reflect the ethical part of the event, i.e. the indictment of Smith and the captain's suicide. Actually, Leggatt is not depicted as a murderous ruffian, and in Leggatt's meta narrative the voice reporting his crime to him when he comes to himself on the bunk emphasizes the nightmarish part about the case rather than the villainy, 'Mr. Leggatt, you have killed a man. You can act no longer as chief mate of this ship'^{lvi}, as if all happened in a bad dream. Leggatt's act of murder based on the heroic intention, in a Conradian situation where the social code does not work, reduces the felony to 'punishment against a fallen society'^{lvii}. CONRAD often used some historical facts for the material of his fiction to give the story a touch of the documentary, and *Lord Jim* is one of the fine examples of a collection of episodes based on historical facts and hearsay. The *Cutty Sark* murder case is retold later in *The Shadow Line* with a different touch. The links between historical facts and fiction, however, should not be delved into in "The Secret Sharer", or in Conrad's fictional world, because what happened is less important than how the story is being conveyed, which is the centre of interest in his art of narrative.

Unlike the narratives by the first-person point of view, such as *Jane Eyre* and *Moll Flanders*, in which the narrator 'I' is looking back over the past, "The Secret Sharer" does not have such space of time that marks a change between an old self in the role of a protagonist in the middle of a story in the past and a new self in the role of a narrator in the present time telling a story in retrospect. The ignorance of sense of chronology in the narrative, makes it closer to introspective monologue than to a retrospective one, more like interior monologue than reminiscence. This interior monologue entails Conrad's impressionism manifested in the preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*. The narrator conveys what he sees according to the order in which it comes into his vision, and its order does not exactly follow the universal tempo of chronology. Concerning time, Conrad's impressionism is unlike Ford's.

Although the status of CONRAD the impressionist was promulgated by his famous collaborator FORD Madox FORD in the memoir of CONRAD after his death^{lviii}, it is least probable that FORD influenced Conrad's impressionism because Ford's impressionism is based on the effects of time. Ford's wordy description of the way in

which the impressionist narrates is worth quoting here to elucidate how his impressionism is dependent on one's memory and emotion.

This is a novel exactly on the lines of the formula that CONRAD and the writer evolved. For it became very early evident to us that what was the matter with the Novel, and the British novel in particular, was that it went straight forward, whereas in your gradual making acquaintanceship with your fellows you never do go straight forward. You meet an English gentleman at your golf club. He is beefy, full of health, the moral of the boy from an English Public School of the finest type. You discover, gradually, that he is hopelessly neurasthenic, dishonest in matters of small change, but unexpectedly self-sacrificing, a dreadful liar but a most painfully careful student of lepidoptera and, finally, from the public prints, a bigamist who has once, under another name, hammered on the Stock Exchange.... Still, there he is, the beefy, full-fed fellow, moral of an English Public School product. To get such a man in fiction you could not begin at his beginning and work his life chronologically to the end. You must first get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past.... That theory at least we gradually evolved.^{lix}

Ford's method of impressionism requires a certain space of time to get to gradual awareness. In other words, FORD is concerned with the logical awareness in the correlative chronological order in retrospect. On the other hand, Conrad's impressionism focuses on concurrent visual impressions.

The abruptness of the flowing darkness in the beginning of the narrative suggests the images of the sweeping darkness magically covering the landscape as if in a dream, and implies loss of narrator's concern with time passing in his consciousness when he tells the darkness fell as follows :

There must have been some glare in the air to interfere with one's sight, because it was only just before the sun left us that my roaming eyes made out beyond the highest ridge of the principal islet of the group something which did away with the solemnity of perfect solitude. The tide of darkness flowed on swiftly ; and with tropical suddenness a swarm of stars came out above the shadowy earth [.]^{lx}

Darkness flowing in out of nowhere and the stars swarming 'with tropical suddenness' emphasize the dream-like aspects of "The Secret Sharer".

This passage in the beginning of "The Secret Sharer" is worth comparing with the anonymous narrator's visual impression of the impending darkness before Marlow starts to narrate in "Heart of Darkness" to elucidate the sense of personal chronology :

The sun set ; the dusk fell on the stream, and lights began to appear along the shore. The Chapman lighthouse, a three-legged thing erect on a mud-flat, shone strongly. Lights of ships moved in the fairway —a great stir of lights going up and going down. And farther west on the upper reaches the place of the monstrous town was still marked ominously on the sky, a brooding gloom in sunshine, a lurid glare under the stars.^{lxi}

Darkness does not fall abruptly in the internal chronology of the anonymous narrator in "The Heart of Darkness". The Chapman lighthouse starts to shine and the lights of the river traffic and the human community beyond begin to spread. The vision of 'a great stir of lights' expresses the mundane but energetic preparations in human society for the impending darkness. Lights paradoxically depict the flow of time during which the dusk is falling.

As the narrative goes on, the only interruption in the middle of Marlow's story about the Congo is the light of the cigar held by the faceless smoker in the boat. This interruption functions as a reminder of the distance between the present and the past and also signals the distance between Marlow and his audience. Conrad's narrative shows self-consciousness every time it gets back to the anonymous narrator and the watching listeners in "Heart of Darkness". And the narrative ends in 'the heart of an immense darkness'. A space of time between Marlow's consciousnesses before and after the Congo expedition is illuminated by the juxtaposition of the anonymous narrator's admiration for the glories of the British Empire and Marlow's recognition after the Congo that Britain was 'one of the dark places of the earth', 'when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago'^{lxii}.

The Lost Human Community

The treatment of the darkness in both fiction makes a sharp contrast. In "Heart of Darkness", darkness in the Congo stands against the modern civilized society

in Europe. The darkness, which invites a variety of symbolic and metaphorical interpretations of the primordial forces, the political, ideological, even religious antithesis down to one's innermost consciousness, is ubiquitous and anytime might swallow the rationality of human society, which is represented by the Director of the Companies, the Lawyer, and the Accountant. But there is no such dichotomy in "The Secret Sharer" because the captain himself is part of darkness, shirking the other side of the world, i.e., 'the unrest of the land'^{lxiii}, which epitomizes human interaction. Absence of a sense of belonging to society, where he is supposed to rule the roost as a captain, and loss of space of time in his consciousness not only undermine the reality of his success and self-realization in the ending, but uncover the undercurrent autism in "The Secret Sharer".

Reading the passages in the beginning and those in the ending of the narrative in "The Secret Sharer" can lead to a deduction that nothing has changed in the narrator's view of the world or nothing has been gained through danger in the community of the ship, which therefore rules out the supposition that the story may seem to have something to do with the identity or the moral awareness which hints at aspects of bildungsroman.

Social communion between the captain and the crew, like a sense of unity between men in "Youth" and in *The Shadow Line*, and such 'solidarity' among the crew as in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, has not been established, but the narrator's delusive, even self-intoxicated communion with the ship is re-confirmed in the ending of the narrative.

In his rapture, the self-complacent captain confirms oneness with his ship, not with his community, in the ending of the narrative, where he narrates, 'Nothing! no one in the world should stand now between us'^{lxiv}. The line in the ending echoes the utterance in the beginning. In the last line of the first paragraph in the beginning of the narrative, after he finishes his odd depiction of the Asian Gulf, the narrator confirms the unity with the ship in his solitude as follows: 'And then I was left alone with my ship, anchored at the head of the Gulf of Siam'. Then, in the second paragraph, the exhilarating moment comes to the narrator in the perfect solitude :

She floated at the starting-point of a long journey, very still in an immense stillness, the shadows of her spars flung far to the eastward by the setting

sun. At that moment I was alone on her decks. There was not a sound in her and around us nothing moved, nothing lived, not a canoe on the water, not a bird in the air, not a cloud in the sky. In this breathless pause at the threshold of a long passage we seemed to be measuring our fitness for a long and arduous enterprise, the appointed task of both our existences to be carried out, far from all human eyes, with only sky and sea for spectators and for judges.^{lxv}

At the start of the narrative, when alone with the ship, the narrator 'I' and the ship 'she' become one as signified by the first-person plural pronouns 'we' and 'us'. Solipsism is explicit in his monologue when the captain expresses the unity with the nameless ship and he narrates, '*we* seemed to be measuring *our* fitness for a long and arduous enterprise' to reaffirm '*our* existences'. The unity is 'the perfect communion' with the personified ship, with no sign of humanity. And 'spectators' and 'judges' that evaluate his success as a captain in his profession are 'only sky and sea', not the other mates of the ship he takes command of. This isolationism implies his skepticism toward the social system and seems to predict his anti-social decision not to leave Leggatt to the law-abiding society for the atonement, and definitely, his final achievement without the spectators.

Although he emphasizes 'the perfect communion of a seaman with his first command', implying that he finally got control of the world he had been so insecure about, what he does not narrate makes his success more doubtful. He never mentions how he may appear in the eyes of the crew before and after the success of the stunt in Koh-ring. It is noteworthy that at the climax of physical danger at the hill of Koh-ring when the other crewmen are intimidated the narrator-captain seems to start a running commentary. The narrative ends in a pseudo-heroic stage performance without an audience, with only sky and sea for spectators and for judges, presenting the self-complacent narrator's delusion in the midst of rapture at his success in getting the ship back into orbit.

Michael P. JONES in "*The Secret Sharer*": *The Triumph of the Imagination* concludes that "The Secret Sharer" must indeed win us over to the heroic ethic that Marlow tales had lost^{lxvi}. In contrast to Marlow stories, especially such anti-heroic narratives as "Heart of Darkness" and *Lord Jim*, in which Conrad's self consciousness creates a watching audience, the definite con-

clusiveness of the narrator-captain's faith to the personal code of ethics with only a celestial audience in "The Secret Sharer" can be taken as the heroic and it leads Michael P. JONES to his view of the heroic ending of the narrative. JONES observes: "The idea of the story as a stage performance is central to the dramatic and narrative situations of "The Secret Sharer"^{lxvii}. In his view, the captain performs a hero within an unquestioned code of ethics and remains true to his vision of the heroic ideal and his imagination of the ideal self. 'The captain, in short, tries not only to take possession of the ship but also to take possession of our imaginations'^{lxviii}.

This study is closer to JONES' view than any others' when he observes that 'in "The Secret Sharer" the heroic world extends outward from the captain's mind, filling the universe with images of his own making, leaving no room for the encroachments of society'^{lxix}. Evidently, the world narrated or seen in "The Secret Sharer" is an extension of the narrator-captain's mind or imagination, but an important aspect of Conrad's fictional world seems to be overlooked, i.e. a great foe to the heroic achievement is the imagination, which such heroic figures as the French lieutenant, Stein in *Lord Jim*, and Singleton in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* lack. The imagination never wins in Conrad's fiction. Therefore, if the world narrated is projection of the narrator's imagination, it is something other than the heroic. In his work in general, the vision based on imagination is vulnerable to delusions of grandeur just like Almayer's daydream and it leads a protagonist to a series of failures as in Jim's case.

The opening tableau is the extended world from the narrator-captain's consciousness, and it suggests no sign of human society. Human society and its members are still out of reach in his consciousness in the ending, which is already heralded by the initial depiction of the terrain when he begins his narrative. In such an odd way as GUERARD puts it succinctly, 'its dream landscape of ill-defined boundaries between land, air and sea'^{lxx}, the narrator starts with his vision of the monotonous Asian Gulf by surveying and shows a span of his sight by using those phrases, 'On my right', 'To the left', 'below my feet', and 'I turned my head' to get the rear view, so that the vision gives the deserted images of 'no sign of human habitation', no sign of life implied by 'a group of "barren" islets' and 'ruins of "stone" walls', and no sign of movement signified by 'the impassive earth', 'the monotonous sweep of the horizon'.

As the depiction of the Asian Gulf goes as far as the eye can reach, it should be perceived that what is missing at the beginning of the narrative is the sanguine image of human society. The first lines of the narrative give deserted, even desolate images of human society, symbolized as 'half-submerged bamboo fences':

On my right hand there were lines of fishing-stakes resembling a mysterious system of half-submerged bamboo fences, incomprehensible in its division of the domain of tropical fishes, and crazy of aspect as if abandoned for ever by some nomad tribe of fishermen now gone to the other end of the ocean.^{lxxi}

Fish trap or cage left behind by its owner and deteriorating in water is the first vision presented by the narrator, and it is the afterimage of human society in the narrator's consciousness.

Conclusion

In his time, from the late 19th century through the dawn of the next century, when the traditional kind of omniscient narrator's point of view is in a moribund state, CONRAD, in collaboration with Ford Madox FORD, above all, among modern writers in Chelsea circle, and also in his tutor-disciple relationship to Henry JAMES, was seeking for any other narrative techniques than George Elliot's third-person point of view in *Middlemarch* and Defoe's first-person telltale style in *Moll Flanders*. Conrad's experimentalism is well reflected in the early stages as in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, in which the first-person narrator cannot stay in its position, suddenly jumps into the other person's consciousness, and seems to be precariously swaying between the first-person and the third-person points of view. A solution was given when the impressionist's declaration in the Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* was demonstrated by the sailor Marlow, and then by the anonymous West European language teacher in *Under Western Eyes*, who was transformed into the multiple narrators in *Chance* in the later stage.

The pessimism and skepticism about the effects of words are personified as the satirical language teacher in *Under Western Eyes*, who opines when he starts his narration, 'Words, as is well known, are the great foes of reality' in the second paragraph of the first page of the novel. Then, in the same paragraph, the language teacher claims that he should not be eligible for a narrator who conveys reality by generalizing, 'To a teacher of languages, there comes a time when the

world is but a place of many words and man appears a mere talking animal not much more wonderful than a parrot'.

Any one of the first-person narrators in Conrad's fiction is not a morally respectable person. All are vulnerable to the prejudices and preoccupations of their time and place in which they were born. So are the pseudo-moralist's view of the narrator in the *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* when celebrating the solidarity and the sentimentalist's moral view of Marlow, who is whining over seamanship in those good old days in "Youth". Marlow in other times in Marlow stories is also biased in his own right. Marlow in all his life has the misogyny and the racial prejudices indigenous to 19th century England. The language teacher in *Under Western Eyes* is biased by West European superiority, especially by the supremacy of the prosperous British Empire at the turn of the century, over the East Europeans involved in the political intrigue of the dilapidated Russian Empire.

Basically, the first-person narrators in Conrad's fiction are also isolated, not just because they are the man-haters, but because they believe deep down they won't be able to communicate with the world at the end of the day. Their isolation is brought about by skepticism and pessimism towards the world. However, Marlow, the language teacher, and others like Jim as the first-hand narrator in *Lord Jim*, are all trying to love and understand the world in spite of their skepticism and pessimism towards it.

"The Secret Sharer" joins the same league table where "The Lagoon", "Karain", Marlow stories and *Under Western Eyes* are listed for discussion of the first-person perspective and the double-self theme. Such novels, on the other hand, like *Nostromo* and *The Secret Agent* come to the other league table where Conrad's return to the omniscient perspective and his manipulation of simultaneous scenes in the social milieu should be discussed.

CONRAD established the oral narrative, that is, orally transmitted narrative, in the first Marlow story "Youth" and this style of narrative recurrently calls attention to a watching hearer. The narrative hinges on the nostalgia towards what is vanishing, created by a tension between the mature Marlow narrating in the present and his twenty-two years younger former self. The sentimental, but mechanical repetition of the phrase 'Pass the bottle' that brings readers back to the present

time, working as a reminder of the space of time, was transformed into the more interactive exchange of words between the narrator-Marlow and the seafarers in the cruising yawl *Nellie* in "Heart of Darkness". PETTERSSON observes that "'Youth' reflects central Conradian ideas about time and consciousness"^{lxxii} as the narrative visually re-creates the whole reality in the past and the sense of the inexorable flux of time that reside in Marlow's mind.

The vivid visual representation of the narrative impressionism reaches its apex in "Heart of Darkness". Kenneth GRAHAM points out the dream-like quality of "Heart of Darkness" by quoting Marlow's words 'It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream'^{lxxiii}. The dream-like aspect of the narrative such like experiencing someone's dream assumes more salience in "The Secret Sharer", just because it lacks an audience. Accordingly, the narrator-captain does not have the aesthetic self-reflexiveness and narrates what he sees, which is at the same time unseen by the others.

The perspectives of narratives in Conrad's work in general entail alternation of the seen and the unseen. The seen but not spoken of is the anonymity such as the untold name of Kurtz's fiancée/his Intended in "Heart of Darkness" and the anonymous narrator on the nameless ship in "The Secret Sharer". The unseen but spoken of are such as Kurtz before the actual encounter with Marlow, Jim as a young wayfarer in hearsay when not seen by Marlow, and Leggatt, who is searched for and yet to be arrested. A perspective in "The Secret Sharer" is an epitome of this arbitrary alternation engendered by Conrad's self-consciousness, especially by his skeptical, pessimistic attitude toward writing a narrative.

The mysterious figure, Leggatt, is not seen by the other mates but must have been much talked about by them. The accumulating hints that some trace or the shadow of Leggatt has been talked about by the crew are given by the interruption of the awkward presence of the steward. The interplay of the seen and the unseen becomes most explicit when the psychological tension reaches its climax, that is, when the captain sees out of the companion the steward talking eagerly to the group of mates and they quickly disperse on catching sight of the captain^{lxxiv}.

Although it may well be a classroom reading because of its definite conclusiveness of the perspective in the overt plot and of its moderate length, "The Secret

Sharer" is not a story of useful information that expects a listener to share a set of ideal values as those in bildungsroman. If modern fiction no longer assumes a listener, the art of narrative in "The Secret Sharer" is modern. The dramatization of the narrative texture is at its core; when, where, and how the story is told is more important than what is being told. The alternation of the seen and the unseen things in "The Secret Sharer" reflects arbitrariness of language; the arbitrary jump that a word can detach itself from what it names but anytime can return to it.

The solipsism in dramatizing the narrative in "The Secret Sharer" takes the place of the empiricism of superimposing one's consciousness upon an other's in "Heart of Darkness".

The process of writing a narrative becomes no longer the translation of a told narrative in Conrad's art of narrative since the speech narrative is overwhelmed by the axiom of the visually-oriented impressionism. Only the world projected from one's mind is truth and the real world. Based on this epistemological solipsism, "The Secret Sharer" is an extreme form of Conrad's narrative impressionism.

Notes

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- xxiii *ibid.*, p. 93.
- xxiv *ibid.*, p. 119.
- xxv *op. cit.*
- xxvi *op. cit.*
- xxvii *ibid.*, p. 95.
- xxviii *ibid.*, p. 97.
- xxix *ibid.*, p. 93.
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- xxxvi *op. cit.*
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- xxxviii *op. cit.*
- xxxix *ibid.*, pp. 117-118.
- xl Lawrence GRAVER, p. 155.
- xli "The Secret Sharer", p. 120.
- xlii *op. cit.*
- xliii *ibid.*, p. 116.
- xliv *op. cit.*
- xlvi *ibid.*, p. 119.
- xlvi *ibid.*, p. 116.
- xlvi *ibid.*, p. 117.
- xlvi *op. cit.*
- xlix *ibid.*, p. 92.
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「秘密の共有者」の語りに観られる恣意性と現代性

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要約：ジョーゼフ・コンラッドの短編「秘密の共有者」の独特の語り手法とテーマの扱い方の斬新さを他のコンラッドの作品と比べて考察した。短編小説は、テーマの着想や語り手法などにおいて長編小説の先駆けであり、また長編においてさらに複雑に洗練されるという一般的なイメージがあるが、短編「秘密の共有者」は、それ自体で自立性を持っていて、その後の焼き直しである『日脚』やマローウの物語とは一線を画しており、この短編における「分身のテーマ」の語り方はコンラッドの現代性を表している。コンラッドの作品の中では、ひとつの流れとなっている「分身のテーマ」は、その後の長編『西洋人の目の下で』で扱われることになるが、しかし、その意味の方向性が両作品においては異なっている。分身との遭遇は、長編『西洋人の目の下で』においては、『ロードジム』のパトナ号からの飛び降り事件と同様の中心的情景となり、良心の呵責の物語を展開させるが、一方「秘密の共有者」においては主人公兼語り手の反社会的かつ自閉的な性質を体現化する心象となり、倫理的葛藤は無い。語り手「私」の視野の中には共同体としての人間社会やその構成員たちのイメージが最初から欠落している。特に、語りの冒頭は、生々しい社会への関与を忌避する心象風景を如実に現わしていて、また結末にもそれが投影されている。「秘密の共有者」は語りの形式を回顧というよりも意識の中での内的独白に近いものにし、その徹底した唯我主義的認識に基づく視覚印象主義の語りの視点が持っている恣意性は、語りと言語との関係性そのものに光をあてている点において、コンラッドの現代性を示している。

キーワード：コンラッド、コンラッドの短編小説、小説の語りの視点、分身のテーマ、秘密の共有者、闇の奥、西洋人の目の下で

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